

VZCZCXRO1731
OO RUEHAG RUEHROV RUEHSL RUEHSR
DE RUEHLM #0932/01 2781214
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
O 051214Z OCT 09
FM AMEMBASSY COLOMBO
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 0595
INFO RUCNMEM/EU MEMBER STATES COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUEHKA/AMEMBASSY DHAKA PRIORITY 1927
RUEHIL/AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD PRIORITY 8963
RUEHKT/AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU PRIORITY 7201
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY 5146
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI PRIORITY 3341
RUEHNY/AMEMBASSY OSLO PRIORITY 5102
RUEHOT/AMEMBASSY OTTAWA PRIORITY 1379
RUEHSM/AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM PRIORITY 0637
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO PRIORITY 4212
RUEHCG/AMCONSUL CHENNAI PRIORITY 9523
RUEHBI/AMCONSUL MUMBAI PRIORITY 6824
RUEHON/AMCONSUL TORONTO PRIORITY 1308
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA PRIORITY 3758
RHHMUNA/HQ USPACOM HONOLULU HI PRIORITY
RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS PRIORITY
RHEHAAA/NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 COLOMBO 000932

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR SCA/INSB

E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/04/2019

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PREF](#) [PHUM](#) [PTER](#) [EAID](#) [MOPS](#) [CE](#)

SUBJECT: SECRETARY'S COMMENTS ON RAPE ELICIT STRONG
REACTION BY GSL

COLOMBO 00000932 001.2 OF 002

Classified By: AMBASSADOR PATRICIA BUTENIS. REASONS: 1.4 (B, D)

¶1. (C) On October 2 the Ambassador was summoned to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs by Foreign Minister Bogollogama to discuss Secretary Clinton's October 1 UN speech, in which she mentioned Sri Lanka as a place where rape had been used as a "tactic of war." Bogollagama expressed his deep concern that a friendly nation such as the United States would make such a statement without evidence, and that as a friend of Sri Lanka the USG was expected to know Sri Lanka better than this. The Foreign Minister said Sri Lanka had never promoted or advocated the use of rape as a tactic of war. Ambassador recommended that the creation of a formal GSL mechanism to address accountability would begin to engender more trust by the international community.

¶2. (C) FM Bogollagama gave the Ambassador an Aide Memoire expressing GSL concern about the statement and requesting "an urgent and immediate retraction of the unfounded assertion about Sri Lanka." (NOTE: The full text of the Aide Memoire is reproduced below in para 4. END NOTE.) Ambassador confirmed receipt of the letter from Ambassador Verveer by the Foreign Minister, and will respond in writing to the Aide Memoire, working from the text of this letter.

¶3. (C) This was an unfortunate incident, which may weaken our credibility with the GSL and the Sri Lankan public on the eve of the release of the war crimes report. The Embassy will not be releasing the text of Ambassador Verveer's letter publicly. While the text helps to clarify to some extent the Secretary's remarks for the Foreign Minister, it would likely not be understood by a wider Sri Lankan audience. We are referring press and public inquiries to the MFA.

¶4. (SBU) BEGIN FULL TEXT OF THE AIDE MEMOIRE PRESENTED TO AMBASSADOR BY FM BOGOLLAGAMA:

AIDE MEMOIRE

The Government of Sri Lanka is deeply shocked and concerned that the published text of the opening remarks made on 30 September 2009 by H.E. Mrs. Hillary Clinton, US Secretary of State in relation to the adoption of a UNSC Resolution to Combat Sexual Violence in Armed Conflict has the following assertion:

"We have seen rape used as a tactic of war before in Bosnia, Burma, Sri Lanka and elsewhere."

The Government of Sri Lanka wishes to emphasize in this regard that the security operations within the country always had as their sole and only objective, the elimination of the terrorist menace of the LTTE. Accordingly, in these operations which were successfully concluded in May this year, the constant and absolute priority was the protection and safeguarding of the civilian population, in accordance with the Rule of Law enshrined in the Constitution of Sri Lanka and in keeping with the highest standards of internationally accepted humanitarian law, including common Article III of the Geneva Conventions governing armed conflicts that are not of an international character. Moreover, it should be noted that no credible organization or personality based either internationally or within Sri Lanka has ever accused the Government of Sri Lanka and its Security Forces of using rape as a tactic of war. Any allegation of this nature therefore seriously maligns Sri Lanka and will only strengthen the hands of those who are inimical to the process of rehabilitation and national reconciliation that is now being pursued by the Government, with the support of all segments of national society.

COLOMBO 00000932 002.2 OF 002

Sri Lanka is privileged to have a long and valued friendship with the US. The Government of Sri Lanka therefore surmises that the aforementioned assertion is due to the false and malicious anti-Sri Lanka propaganda carried out by interested parties. It is in the context of this bilateral friendship and given the circumstances that have been outlined above, that the Government of Sri Lanka looks forward to an urgent and immediate retraction of the unfounded assertion about Sri Lanka.

2nd October 2009

END TEXT OF AIDE MEMOIRE
BUTENIS